Welcome to the WSU Asotin County Extension Newsletter! This is a quarterly electronic newsletter highlighting events and topics of interest to residents of Asotin County and the surrounding area. This newsletter can also be viewed on our website: extension.wsu.edu/asotin/

Do you have an event or subject you would like added to our newsletter or website? Would you like to be removed from our Extension Newsletter email list?

Contact the Extension Office
Phone: (509) 243-2009 Email: jreed@co.asotin.wa.us.

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Contact Us

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Washington State University helps people develop leadership skills and use research based knowledge to improve their economic status and quality of life.

Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension Office.
4-H News/Events and Youth Opportunities

4-H Enrollment Begins Oct 1st!

Registration for 2018-2019 begins on Oct 1st. The registration deadline to participate in the 2019 Asotin County Fair is Nov 1, 2018.

Interested in enrolling your child in Asotin County 4-H? It’s easy, just follow these steps:

Choose a project. There are many projects to choose from in 4-H. Visit the “Projects and Publications” page. Each club has leaders that help the youth with certain project areas. Asotin County does not have leaders available for all the projects 4-H has to offer. If you, or someone you know is interested in becoming a 4-H leader, please contact the Asotin County 4-H office.

Choose a 4-H Club
Pick a 4-H club and contact the 4-H leader to determine in they have openings for the projects you want your child to enroll in (visit the “Become a 4-H member” page). Asotin County has 4-H Clubs located in Clarkston, Asotin and Anatone. Each club offers certain projects. Review the “Asotin County 4-H Clubs” page and find which club(s) you may be interested in joining. If there are any openings, contact the organizational leader of that 4-H Club, or you can just contact the WSU Asotin County Extension office and we’ll help you through the process.

Enroll in Asotin County 4-H using the 4-H Online program. Detailed enrollment instructions are located at http://extension.wsu.edu/asotin/4h-youth-development/4h_information_page/ under ‘Enrollment Forms’

Fees
The enrollment fee for the 2018-2019 year is $35; the mandatory State 4-H fee is $25 and the Asotin County fee is $10. Cloverbuds, ages 5-7, will not be charged the county fee. Volunteers do not pay any enrollment fees. Payment can be made by cash or check made payable to Asotin County 4-H. Enrollment is not approved until fees are paid.

Scholarships will be available for those that need assistance with the enrollment fee. Scholarship request forms are available at the Extension Office or can be found on our website under ‘Enrollment Forms’.

Individuals who wish to provide scholarships for low income 4-H youth who need assistance with the enrollment fee may make a donation directly to the Asotin County 4-H Leader’s Council. Asotin County wishes to ensure finances will never be a barrier to participate in 4-H.

Information on the 4-H program, projects, clubs, and scholarships are available at: http://extension.wsu.edu/asotin/4h-youth-development/

Returning 4-H Families
If you were enrolled last year, you will need to re-enroll using your email and password from last year. DO NOT create a new profile if you cannot log in; call the Extension Office at 509-243-2009 for assistance.
4-H Leader of the Year

The 4-H Leader of the Year award recognizes outstanding adult, teen and youth leaders.

Amber Hartley was named 4-H Adult Leader of the Year for 2017-2018.

General Organizational Leader of the Range Riders 4-H group.

“Amber is so knowledgeable and passionate about horsemanship and we are so fortunate to have her as our leader. There is so much to learn and she is always there for us to answer questions or help us with our horses. I could not be more grateful for this opportunity or more thankful for Amber being such a positive role model in my life”.

Nominated by 4-H family Holly Murphy and Sharlene Tiller

“Amber has gone above and beyond expectations to give supplies, advice, and time. She has, on numerous occasions, spent extra hours with me and our group to help us improve our horsemanship. Amber is very generous with her tack and supplies from letting us borrow saddles and bridles to using her horse essentials, even down to shampoo. I have learned so much from Amber and have improved my skills tremendously under her leadership”.

Nominated by 4-H member Macy Green

Racheal Spinelli was named 4-H Teen Leader of the Year for 2017-2018.

Racheal was nominated by Stephanie Lathrop, leader of Muddy Buddyz 4-H club

“Racheal has withstood the challenges of numerous hurdles this year due to extenuating circumstances beyond her control. During this entire time, even though it hurt her personally, she always maintained a positive demeanor. She has taken the high road when faced with all of these challenges and always looks for, and finds, the silver lining in all things”.

“While all of the afore mentioned challenges were going on, she still found time to consistently help our whole 4-H group as she was voted in as the President of the group this year. She never lets positions of earned authority interfere with her positive attitude, kindness and/or willingness to help. It is in these areas she is truly a role model as she always helped with feedings, cleaning the barn, helping our younger group members with cane cues and washing and weighing”.

“She also goes above and beyond to specifically work with our new 4-H members. Racheal has been a friend and an immense positive mentor, leader, and role model to all of our area youth and really deserves this award – I’m so very proud of this positive young woman and I look forward to seeing what awesome things she accomplishes in the future”.

“Racheal has such a wonderful genuine kind heart and caring soul. It is refreshing to see that there are kids that still shine when faced with adversity and still have the capacity to care for others at the same time”.

Congratulations to Amber and Racheal and thank you for all your hard work in 4-H!
Fall Gardening Series
Join the Asotin County Master Gardeners at the Fall Garden Series of classes. The classes are held in the Lecture Hall at Walla Walla Community College, Clarkston Campus on Tuesdays from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

This year’s topics:

- **October 16th—Native Plants and Native Pollinators**. Selecting and planting native plants that provide great pollinator habitat. This class will also discuss identifying bees, butterflies, bumble bees and other pollinators native to our area. Presenter: Pamela Pavek, Natural Resource Conservation Service in Moscow. Asotin County Master Gardeners John Freeman and Larry Nelson will talk about native pollinators and their habitat.

- **October 23rd—Heirloom Fruit Trees for the Inland Northwest**. This class will discuss the importance of heirloom fruits in biodiversity, adaptability, and sustainability. And why they have great taste! Presenter: Kathy Callum, WSU Spokane County Master Gardener. Asotin County Master Gardener Deloris Davisson will talk about saving heirloom seeds.

- **October 30th—Firewise Landscaping—Are you prepared?** This class will discuss what you can do to help protect your home and acreage from fires. Diseases and insects affecting trees in our area will also be discussed. Presenter: Dr. Randy Brooks, U. of Idaho Extension Forester. Asotin County Master Gardeners will also present on related topics.

To pre-register for classes, go to [https://extension.wsu.edu/asotin/upcoming-events-and-workshops/](https://extension.wsu.edu/asotin/upcoming-events-and-workshops/), or call the Extension Office. Registration for one or all of the classes is also accepted at time of the event.

Master Gardener Program Welcomes New Interns

The 15 week Master Gardener training classes are held in the late winter early spring of even numbered years. The 2018 training class included persons from Asotin, Garfield and Whitman Counties in Washington, and Nez Perce County Idaho.

**Asotin County** welcomes our 4 Master Gardener interns:
Carol Larreau, Nora and Gary Pearson, and Vicki Van Horn.

**Garfield County Master Gardeners** welcome their new intern, Barbara DeHerrara.

**Whitman County** welcomes interns Shelly Chambers-Fox and Tracy Trese to their MG program.

The next Master Gardener training class will be held in 2020. If you are interested in becoming a Master Gardener, in Asotin, Garfield, Whitman or Nez Perce County, contact the Asotin County Extension Office.
How a Master Gardener Program Changed My Life
By Barb DeHerrera, WSU Garfield County Master Gardener

My husband and I moved across the country, camping along the way. I am sure I mentioned how spiders liked me and how I had a fear of them. For whatever reason they tend to gravitate toward me. I knew this and was generally aware of any in my surroundings. We were stopped at a campground and decided to get up early, that would be 5 AM to shower and get on our way. There was a family shower, it had plenty of room to change clothes, shower and get ready for the day. When we entered the shower I noted a LARGE spider in the corner farthest away from us. While showering, I kept my eye on him continually. I needed to wash my face, I told my husband to watch that spider while I washed my face. Apparently, I had not yet learned that spouses do not always listen or fully understand directions. I washed my face quickly, opened my eyes.......yes, the LARGE spider had traversed the room, and was now dangling 6 inches from my face. I screamed, more than once. My husband hit the spider, it was so large it made a resounding smack on the wall and bounced back at us. That was the spiders last swing and he was disposed of. My husband now understands what I mean about spiders and me and keeps them away.
What does this story have to do with Master Gardener Program? Last week I let a spider go. And that is no small change in attitude for me!

In the late summer of 2017, my friend started encouraging me to take the Master Gardener Program. In our area, it is offered every 2 years and January 2018 would be the next class or I would have to wait 2 more years. I had retired, then returned to work part time. I really wanted to take the class, but it was only offered on Tuesday afternoon and that was the one day I was required to work. My friend told me I would just have to retire again, so I did. That was a good choice.

I was reading something recently that talked about following your passion, I was already passionate about gardening, so I took the Master Gardener Program to develop my passion. I now look at the world differently. I see things flying through the air.....Wait, what is that? Friendly pollinator or crop-damaging insect? I see things crawling on the ground, on flowers, on shrubs, and on trees. Wait, what is that? Is that a good guy or damaging guy? And how much damage am I willing to put up with in order to not harm the good guys? I see a branch that does not look quite right. I get closer to inspect for signs and symptoms of disease. Through all of this I try really hard not to trespass on others property, but I am curious about everything now! I never realized that a ladybug goes through a complete metamorphosis, I am sure I have squished lots of baby ones thinking they were some sort of damaging insect.

Another class was on turf management, a subject that was not particularly interesting to me. However several weeks later my husband was watching a golf game and said “Look at that grass growing on the steep hillside, I wonder how they maintain that?” I said, “Let me tell you about the type of grass they use for that purpose.”

Because of the WSU Master Gardener Program, I look at our world differently, and I let spiders go!
Thank you Asotin County Extension for organizing our program, thank you Susan Morrow for making me retire, thank you Sue Fitzgerald for welcoming me into Garfield County's program and thank you to all my mentors!

Barbara DeHerrera, newbie Master Gardener
Walla Walla County might just be the only place on Earth where you have to brake for bees.

*During the alkali bee season in June, speed limits are lowered on country roads around Walla Walla County*
*CREDIT: ZACH MAZUR*

“You can see the signs here,” says Mike Ingham, as he drives by a 20-mile-per-hour speed limit sign with a smaller sign below stating “Alkali Bee Area.” “There’s actually a county ordinance to slow the cars down who go by here, because a speeding car can kill a lot of alkali bees.”

Mike Ingham is a third-generation alfalfa seed farmer outside Touchet, Washington. His family is one of about a dozen in the Walla Walla Valley who are responsible for producing a quarter of the country’s alfalfa seed. That’s a quarter of what’s grown into one of America’s biggest crops — one that feeds cows and livestock the world over. That might sound staggering, but they don’t do it alone: they have millions of tiny, native helpers, thanks to one of the most unique agricultural partnerships in the country.

“This is a really new bee bed, and it is really taking off,” Ingham says, as he drives alongside what initially looks like a barren hillside of parched earth, surrounded by lush, flowering alfalfa fields. But a closer look reveals it’s not barren at all: it’s the bee equivalent of high-density condos. Bees are crawling in and out of thousands of tiny holes. “If you look up over the horizon there, you can see there’s just a fog of bees,” he says, pointing to the top of the hill. “Nowhere else in the world will you see this.”

The partnership between the farmers and the alkali bees was born out of necessity, with a healthy dose of luck. After the spring snow melt runs out, this stretch of arid land straddling the Washington/Oregon state line gets basically no water through the summer. As a consequence, most in the area, 22,504 acres to be exact, grows alfalfa seed, rotated out with some wheat, because neither requires summer water. The seed is then sold to other farmers to plant as alfalfa hay to the tune of $42 million, according to the Washington State Department of Agriculture.

When American farmers need pollinators, most ship in European honey bees. But honey bees are total cheats when it comes to pollinating alfalfa’s purple blossoms. They hate the way the stamen bops them on the head when they trip the flower, so they sneak in from the side and steal the nectar without pollinating in return.

Alfalfa seed farmers elsewhere buy alfalfa leafcutter bees from Canada instead, which happily trip the flowers but can get quite expensive. But even they are no match for the native alkali bees, with their mesmerizing iridescent stripes, who range 3-to-5 miles per trip and pollinate alfalfa blossoms like evolutionary professionals.

“What we can boast is that these alfalfa seed growers here have yields on a per-acre basis 50 percent greater than anywhere else that alfalfa seed’s produced in the western United States,” says Doug Walsh, an entomologist at Washington State University who works closely with the region’s farmers. “It’s just a beautiful system. It’s neat that we figured out how to make it work.”
One of Marsh’s predecessors first noticed alkali bees’ talent for pollinating alfalfa in the 1950s and began working with farmers to commercialize it. Like many native bees, alkali bees nest in the ground, preferring salty, moist soil. So some farmers started with ditches at the top of salty slopes, so the water would seep down. Others tried trenches full of rocks, soil, straw and water. In recent years, they’ve refined a system of pumps and perforated PVC pipes that run under the ground, which they then cover with tons of table salt.

“We learn what works and what doesn’t work,” says Ingham’s son, Patrick. “We’re such a minority of farmers that do this thing that we’re all left to work together to make it better.”

For the Inghams and their neighbors, cultivating the bee beds has become a way of life handed down and improved on through generations. Tim Wagoner says one of the first jobs his dad gave him when he was little was scaring birds away.

“When the bees come out of the ground, the bees are all wet and they can’t fly, and they got to sit out here like a little salamander on a rock trying to get warm, and the starlings will come in and gobble them up,” he says. “Ever since I was a kid, you’re always excited to come see the bees, and watch them progress and work on the bee beds and expand and do different things.”

So while farmers throughout the West have plowed up the ground where alkali bees nest for crops or inadvertently eradicated them with insecticides, the farmers here have expanded their beds over the decades, at a cost of thousands per acre, and now house a steady population of 18 million bees.

Which isn’t to say it’s always been sunshine and alfalfa blossoms. There have been die-offs in the past due to heavy rains and pesticide use. But with the help of Walsh, who tests for the least toxic pesticides, the region’s farmers have developed a successful integrated pest management program over the past 10 years that involves only spraying when the harmful insects outnumber the beneficial ones by a certain ratio. And they spray only at night when the bees are asleep in their holes. Walsh is also developing remote sensors in the beds to better predict when the bees will first emerge each spring, so farmer’s can alter their spraying to bee-friendly practices over the roughly six weeks the bees are active.

“I sprayed this field a week ago with insecticide, and look, there’s millions of bees right here,” says Wagoner, pointing to the cloud swirling around him. “I think it’s a great opportunity to explain to the people that are anti-pesticide that we are friends of the fuzzies, because we love these bees, and we don’t want to hurt them.”

*Copyright 2018 Oregon Public Broadcasting*
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Rush Skeleton-What?!
By Sarah Murt, Asotin County Noxious Weed Coordinator

The spring and summer of 2018 has been a bumper crop year for weeds. Namely one rush skeletonweed. “Rush skeletonweed, what is that?” you may ask. Rush skeletonweed is a perennial weed that can be 1 to 4 feet tall. It has a tap-root that can be up to 7 feet deep! Rush skeletonweed starts as a small rosette that looks similar to that of a dandelion or chicory. After bolting, it has brown, downward-pointing hairs at the base. When I describe rush skeletonweed to people, I always ask if they are familiar with chicory, as both plants look similar. One of the ways I tell these chicory from rush skeletonweed is by the flower color. Chicory flowers are light purple while rush skeletonweed flowers are yellow. Rush skeletonweed stems are bright green to a more yellow-green color, and do not have a lot of leaves towards the top of the plant, hence the “skeletonweed” part of the name.

The main way rush skeletonweed grows is through little buds near the top of the taproot, but lateral roots also have buds that form new plants. Seeds also form in the flowers and there can be 15,000 to 20,000 seeds per plant! All these different ways of growth make rush skeletonweed very hard to eradicate once it is established. It has been known to slow down harvest machinery, take over rangeland, and reduce plant and animal diversity.

“So, what can I do with rush skeletonweed if I see or have it?” Prevention and early detection are key in avoiding high costs later on. If there are new plants (less than 5 weeks old), not already in an established stand, their root systems haven’t developed yet and they can be uprooted. The entire root system needs to be uprooted as well, or there is a chance it will re-grow. Plants that are pulled must be disposed of in a garbage bag in the garbage, not composted. Herbicide is also an option for control and eradication. The most effective spraying is done in the fall when the plants are in their rosette stage, but can be done in the early spring as well. Retreatment of the area, sometimes for up to 3 years, is necessary to ensure good control and eventually eradication. It is very important that rush skeletonweed not be cultivated, mowed, pulled (most of the time, just don’t pull it), or burned. Disturbing the plant only makes it angry and want to grow even more widespread, and rapidly.

All is not lost! This summer rush skeletonweed has been on the Asotin County Noxious Weed Control Board’s hotlist and we’ve been going after it and will continue to do so. If you think you’ve seen rush skeletonweed, contact me here at my office, 509-243-2032, or my cell phone, 208-791-5992. Now, on to fall spraying!
December 6th, 2018

A WSDA Private Applicator License is for any person who applies or supervises the application of a restricted use pesticide on land owned or rented by him/her or his/her employer for the purpose of producing an agricultural commodity.

When: December 6, 2018, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (End time is approximate)

Where: Columbia County Fairgrounds, Youth Building

Cost: $10 Pre-registration fee that includes lunch and class.

Prerequisites: Private Applicator Education Manual (EM020). This is available through WSU Publication Store or at the Columbia County Extension Office for $21.00 plus tax and shipping.

Additional Fees: A $58 license and exam fee is due the day of the class. Check or Money Order only (NO CASH, NO CREDIT CARDS).

For additional information, questions, or to register, call the Columbia County Extension Office at 509-382-4741 or drop into the office during office hours.

Please send $10 Registration Fee and Name of Participant to: 137 East Main Street, Dayton WA 99328

Make Registration Checks payable to: Columbia County Treasurer

Make License and exam fees (day of exam) payable to: WSDA

Persons with disabilities should notify the Columbia County Extension Office in advance at 509-382-4741
RESOURCES FOR HOME PRESERVING VENISON
Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation. University of Georgia.
https://nchfp.uga.edu/tips/fall/venison.html

Introduction
Venison offers variety and an unusual flavor to the fall and winter table. When handled properly it can make an excellent meat. It can be refrigerated or frozen as meat cuts or sausage. It can also be preserved by canning, curing, or drying.

Field-to-Refrigerator
Use care when field-dressing the deer. Contaminating the carcass is one of the most common errors hunters make. Cool the carcass to 35 to 40°F as soon as possible. See more information in Proper Care and Handling of Venison from Field to Table, and Proper Processing of Wild Game and Fish. Available from Penn State Cooperative Extension.
https://extension.psu.edu/proper-care-and-handling-of-venison-from-field-to-table

Aging Venison
Aging the carcass will help dissipate the game taste and permit naturally occurring enzymes to tenderize the tissues. Proper aging also firms the meat, giving it better cutting quality. Aging the carcass should be conducted at 40°F or less for no more than 2 to 3 days. Never age at room temperature. Improper storage facilities increase risk for spoilage. If using the venison for sausage, aging is not required.

Refrigerator Storage
Store any unfrozen meat in the refrigerator at 40°F or less, and use it within 2 to 3 days. Keep raw meat separated from other foods and on trays with a lip below any produce or ready to eat foods in order to prevent cross-contamination in the refrigerator.

Freezing Venison
Trim fat and clean cuts so they are ready for end use. Fat will go rancid quicker and often has a very “gamey” undesirable flavor. Use packaging made for the freezer. For best quality, wrap the meat tightly in waxed paper, plastic freezer wrap, or heavy-duty aluminum foil. For added protection, seal wrapped meat in a plastic freezer bag or container. Push out as much air as possible. Seal, label and date each package. Home vacuum sealers will also work for packing venison for freezing. Follow manufacturer directions for vacuum sealing. Freeze no more than 4 pounds per cubic foot of freezer space within a 24-hour period. If space in the home freezer does not permit spreading the packages out, take the wrapped meat to a processing plant or meat locker for quick freezing. Store ground venison in a freezer at 0°F or colder for 3 months for best quality. Venison roasts and steaks can be stored 6 to 9 months at this temperature. Meat quality and flavor will deteriorate in the freezer over time. Proper dressing, handling, packaging, quick freezing, and colder freezer temperatures will help maintain meat quality for the longest period of time. Thaw meat in the refrigerator or microwave, never at room temperature.
**Drying Venison (making jerky)**
Homemade venison jerky was responsible for an outbreak of foodborne illness several years ago. Therefore use only “new” and updated processing recommendations as suggested below:

- University of Georgia: http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/dry/jerky.html
- Colorado State University: http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/09311.html

The jerky will be as brittle as a green stick; it won't snap clean as a dry stick does. Be sure to test it after cooling because it will be pliable when it is still warm. Making low-salt jerky is not recommended. The salt binds the moisture in the meat and thus any bacteria on the meat are more quickly killed because they do not have water available to them.

**Venison Cooking Tips**
The key to cooking venison and to making it tender, moist and delicious is understanding that it has very little fat or fat cover. Add butter or cheese, or baste with other fats for improved flavor. Without much fat cover, the meat tends to dry out. Cook venison slowly using moist heat and baste often with a marinade sauce or oil. Don't overcook. A roast may also be wrapped in aluminum foil after browning or covered in a roasting pan. Strips of bacon may be placed on a roast for self-basting. For these foods to be safe, internal temperatures must be high enough to kill any harmful microorganisms. Cook ground meats, chops, steaks and roasts to 160°F. Venison can be substituted for meat in many recipes and makes an excellent variation to your menu.

![Meat cuts from various parts of the white-tailed deer](https://mwoutdoors.com/what-are-the-best-cuts-of-venison-deboning-deer/)
Venison Chili
https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/18802/venison-chili/
Recipe by: Scotch
“This is an excellent chili recipe for game meats. You can easily substitute venison with buffalo or boar as well”.

Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 tablespoons dark brown sugar
- 3 cups red wine
- 4 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 4 tablespoons tomato paste
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- salt to taste
- 4 tablespoons canola oil
- 10 slices cooked bacon, diced
- 2 pounds venison stew meat, trimmed and finely diced
- 2 cups black beans, cooked and drained

Directions

1. Melt the butter in a large pot over medium heat. Stir in the onion and garlic, and saute for 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the brown sugar and saute for 2 to 3 more minutes. Then stir in the red wine, vinegar, tomato paste, chicken stock, cumin, cayenne pepper, chili powder, cilantro and salt. Simmer for 30 to 35 minutes, or until the mixture is reduced by about half.
2. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Stir in the bacon and fry for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the bacon is browned. Move the bacon to one side of the skillet and add the venison to the empty side of the skillet. Season the meat with salt to taste and saute the meat for 15 minutes, or until well browned. Stir in the beans and toss all together. Transfer this mixture to the simmering pot.
3. Mix everything together thoroughly and let simmer for about 20 more minutes.

Quick-n-Easy Venison Marinade
https://www.wideopenspaces.com/top-5-venison-marinades/

This recipe is a great basic marinade that you could tinker with and alter to suit your own tastes. What’s important is the apple cider, which helps break down some of the tissue in the meat to tenderize and plump up your cut.

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup apple cider (or apple juice)
- ¼ cup Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp dried rosemary
- 2 tsp garlic powder, or 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp sea salt
- ½ tsp ground black pepper